10/533173
PCT/GB2003/004687

JC20 Rec'd PCT/PTO 29 APR 2005

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Claims

1. A data handling system for multi-user transactions comprising a central data processing device incorporating a data store structured in accordance with a predetermined progressive transaction involving cooperation between users, a plurality of data access interfaces for the device for the respective users with defined access privileges, at least some interfaces being read/write interfaces whereby data can be read from and written to the said store in relation to predetermined stages of the said transaction in accordance with the respective said privileges.

2. A system according to claim 1 wherein there are different said defined access privileges giving access to different data.

3. A system according to claim 1 or 2 wherein some define access privileges give access to shared data.

4. A system according to any one of claims 1 to 3 incorporating means for providing data output as hard copy documentation.

5. A system according to any one of claims 1 to 4 incorporating means for bidirectional exchange of said data with a separate user data handling system.

6. A system according to claim 5 wherein the user system comprises a hand held or mobile device.

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7. A system according to any one of claims 1 to 6 structured for multiple said progressive job transactions.

5   8. A system according to any one of claims 1 to 7 when used for a said transaction which constitutes forwarding of a freight consignment between destinations passing through the hands of different intermediaries.

10   9. A system according to any one of claims 1 to 7 when used for a said transaction which constitutes a legal transaction related to the resolution of a problem with different parties working together.

10. A system according to any one of claims 1 to 7 when used for a

15   said transaction which constitutes a public project related to construction work with different parties working together.

11.   A method of tracking movements of freight consignments under the control of a plurality of separate parties wherein each freight

20   consignment has a respective set of data stored at a central data store, and each party has access to the data store for purposes of reading and writing to the data set in accordance with a respective set of permissions.

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